drums and is urging Government to provide excise duty relief;

(b) if so what is Government's reaction to the repeated representations of the paper industry in this regard; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to provide relief to the paper industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (c) in this year's Budget Government have granted certain concessions from excise duty to the paper industry. Representations have been received subsequently from the paper industry seeking further duty concessions. These have been examined but the Government do not find any justification at present for granting further concessions.

Abolition of Export Duty on Coffee

3453. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received several represntations in connection with the abolition of export duty on coffee;

(b) whether the small farmers and coffee cultivators have been mainly affected due to the levy of export duty on coffee; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto and by when a final decision is to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (c) Government have received representations seeking abolition of export duty on coffee, inter alia, on the ground that the duty has adversely affected small farmers and coffee cultivators. The representations have been examined. Taking into account various relevant factors such as the trend in international prices, cost of production, export prospects etc., Government have reduced the export duty on coffee, from Rs. 1700/- to Rs. 1000/- per tonne with effect from the 18th August, 1988.

Funds for Agricultural Pumps in Maharashtra

3454. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NABARD's restrictions are prohibiting Land Development Banks and Cooperative Banks to release funds to the Maharashtra State Eelectricity Board to enable it to give electricity connections for agricultural pumps; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to help the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House to the extent possible.

Charging of Interest on Special Central Assistance to Maharashtra

3455. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Maharashtra Government has requested the Central Government to pass on the entire component of external aid (Special Central Assistance) to the State and charge the same rate of interest which is charged by the external agency which is giving the aid; and